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**Clanton Office:**

1601 7th St. North

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637 Coosa River Pkwy.

# Energizing Opportunities for Others

**Y**ears ago, as with many young parents, Amy and I had the dilemma of what we would tell our children about “Santa Claus.” We wanted them to know that they could trust what we told them and figured that if, or when, they learned the truth, they may doubt those important, truthful facts we shared as they grew up. On the other hand, we knew that a healthy imagination is the key to opening life to more than just facts and hard reality. Albert Einstein said, “Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere.” CS Lewis observed that it is imagination that opens up the emotions of hope, love and even faith.



As our three children grew, we celebrated Christmas through the stories of Jesus’ birth and the jolly old elf that brought presents. We taught them that each of us could follow God’s example of His wonderful gift and that all of us can be Santa Claus for those around us and even others far away. Although our youngest, Tori, was afraid of any big guy in a red suit with a big white beard, all of them took to this idea and enjoyed finding the right gift to give.

When Amy began the tradition of taking them to help at the Christmas Store at the Montgomery First Baptist Church Caring Center, they really started embracing the concept of doing for others. They were so excited to talk

about helping moms and dads have something for their children. When I thought about this article and the season, I was reminded that these three children, who are now young adults, haven’t stopped giving, and they continue to amaze me.

This past summer Tori (and I got to go too) spent time in Mexico helping build houses for the poor; Becca spent time visiting with children in an orphanage in China; and Isaac spent time in his job helping folks in need.

They have all been on so many local,

U.S. and international mission trips, I joke that they have been on mission trips since they were in diapers— and I have pictures to prove it, although they would prefer I not show these. They are all certified lifeguards and enjoy teaching others how to swim.

To say that I am proud of Isaac (and his wife Kim), Becca and Tori would be a gross understatement. They have inspired me throughout my career to be con-



**Tori, on the right, helps build a home on our recent mission trip to Mexico.**

scious of what we give and to be happy that we can be Santa for others. It reminds me of why I so enjoy working in the electric cooperative industry and find it to be extremely fulfilling; each day we get to help people have a better life with affordable, reliable power or invest our efforts in community and economic efforts—at CAEC, we call it “Energizing Opportunities.”

Two things our family has found when traveling, especially outside the U.S. borders: one can always find people who need help, and we have a lot to be thankful for in the United States. We have met the most wonderful people who live in the most distressing situations. Places where indoor plumbing, paved roads, freedom and reliable electric power are rare. These are people who love and work hard to take care of their families with what they have and most of the time they just need a hand and to know there are others who care.

Since 1962, electric cooperatives have found a way to help “Energize Opportunities” around the world through the NRECA International program. Through this effort many small villages and communities in other parts of the world receive reliable energy and it has changed the lives of millions. We have had no problems finding employees willing to spend time helping those who need help. CAEC employees are always ready to go to stormed-ravaged areas to help fellow cooperatives, as was the case last month when Hurricane Sandy hit the Northeast, and they have even traveled this year to help an electric utility in Guatemala. We are very excited to have met officials from Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, and through a partnership with other Alabama coopera-



**CAEC employees review equipment and practices with workers in Guatemala to aid them in safely delivering reliable electricity.**

tives and vendors, we are gathering needed material to help them develop their electric utility system and provide much-needed training for their workers.

Have you ever seen the map that shows what the whole world looks like at night? It is disturbingly evident that where there is illumination at night because of affordable, reliable electric energy, there is quality of life. When you compare that nighttime map of darkness on continents with a map that shows poverty, unemployment or life span, you might recognize a pattern. Alabama Climatologist Dr. John Christy has a quote that rings constant in my head, “Where there is no access to affordable, reliable energy, life is hard, and life is short.” With a little investment of capital and time, we can all help make a difference in someone’s life, and perhaps impact conditions in a way that they are easier and maybe a little less hostile for others.

Cooperatives have the privilege of serving others and while this might begin with our local communities, it reaches far beyond the place we call home. We bring electricity, which in turn provides for an improved and hopefully more peaceful way of life. Isn’t that what the season is all about, what we each can do to emulate a gift we were all given. I hope your season is bright and that you and yours have a Merry Christmas and wonderful New Year! ■

**Tom Stackhouse  
President/CEO**



**CAEC crews assist Choptank Electric Cooperative in Maryland after Hurricane Sandy.**

# There's a Payment Option for Everyone

In today's fast-paced world, we all need a convenient way to pay our bills. That's why CAEC offers several payment options with your power bill, whether it is in person or by the click of a mouse.

## Payment Options

### Bank Draft

The most convenient payment method we offer is bank draft, and you never have to worry about being late with a payment! With bank draft, your bill is automatically deducted from your checking account ensuring prompt payment on your account. You still receive a bill as you normally would, but the amount is deducted from your bank account on the due date shown on your bill. If you have questions concerning your bill, you can call the office at 1-800-545-5735 prior to the withdrawal. If you have questions or you would like to sign up for CAEC's bank draft program, give us a call.

### Online

Save the price of a stamp and pay your bill any time of day by taking advantage of our online payment system. By using an E-Check or debit/credit card, pay your bill from the comfort of your home. You can also take advantage of other online services, such as seeing your daily usage through [MyUsage.com](http://MyUsage.com), which allows you to monitor your daily power consumption and also lets you set e-mail alerts when your usage approaches a certain threshold--that you pre-determine.



### Mobile App

Keep track of your account, pay or view your bill and more with the CAEC App for Android and Apple devices. It's a free service that brings the online functionality of our website to an application for your smart phone. You can find the app via a link on our website ([www.caec.coop](http://www.caec.coop)) or search for "CAEC" in your mobile app store.



### By Phone

You can make a payment at anytime via our automated phone system. Easy-to-follow instructions guide you through the process. Simply have your CAEC member account number available as well as your credit/debit card information when you dial 1-800-545-5735 or locally at (334) 365-6762. Once the greeting message begins, you may press 2 for the Bill Payment option.

## Other Billing Options

### Levelized Billing

Want to make your electric bill fit your monthly budget? CAEC's levelized billing program prevents drastic changes in your bill, even in the coldest or hottest months of the year. A levelized bill is based on the average usage for 12 months so the levelized amount will change



slightly each month (which makes it a great partner with our Bank Draft payment option). If CAEC has been providing electricity to your home for at least six months, you are eligible to participate in levelized billing.

### E-Bill

Another convenient payment option for CAEC members is E-Bill. Instead of receiving a paper bill, we will send your bill by e-mail at the same time of the month as you presently receive your bill. E-Bill can be combined with any of our other payment options such as Bank Draft, Online and Levelized billing. Also, to cut down on clutter, you can sign up for e-billing for more than one account—as long as all bills are e-mailed to the same address.

### Prepay

A unique option for members to manage and pay for their electric usage, Prepay is just what it sounds like, paying for electricity prior to its consumption. The prepay program provides a great deal of flexibility—new members can have the option to sign up for Prepay instead of having to pay a deposit, while existing members

can use Prepay to efficiently manage energy consumption. Prepay members can make payments at any of CAEC's service centers, by phone or through the Web. Payments are automatically applied, and notifications for daily balances and low balances can be sent a number of ways—through a phone call, text message or e-mail—at the time of day or night that you choose. Participants can check their prepay account balance—24 hours a day, seven days a week—via the internet or phone.

### Service Centers

Payments can be made in person at any of our service centers located in Clanton, Prattville, Wetumpka and our upcoming new location in Rockford, Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays. We also have four authorized payment centers located at both Whitney Bank locations in Prattville, the Maplesville Supermarket and Cooperative Propane in Tallassee.

To learn more about or to sign up for any of these payment choices, call us at 1-800-545-5735 and find the option that works best for you! ■

## Keep Your Christmas Tree **Green** by Recycling It

**T**hrough a partnership with CAEC and Winn Dixie grocery stores, you can keep your live Christmas tree green long after all your holiday decorations have been put away—by recycling it.

For the 20th year, live Christmas trees can be dropped off at Winn Dixie store parking lots in Alexander City, Clanton, Millbrook, Prattville and Wetumpka, Dec. 21 through Jan. 2 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Trees must be undecorated, and can be left at the drop-off site in the stores' parking lots during the designated week. CAEC employees will chip the trees for use as mulch and for erosion control. ■





# Be Ready for Santa with a Safe Holiday Season

**T**his most wonderful time of the year can also be one of the most stressful—particularly when it comes to keeping kids and youngsters safe during hectic schedules that may include parties, presents, travel and meals. We at CAEC want your holiday to be a safe one so follow these tips from the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) to help protect little ones:

## Electronic gifts

About 70 percent of child-related electrical accidents occur at home when adult supervision is present, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. In many cases it is new toys that pose a danger.

- Electric-powered toys and other devices can be hazardous if improperly used or used without proper supervision. An adult should supervise the use of any electrical product. Consider both the maturity of the child and the nature of the toy when deciding how much supervision is required.
- Do not buy an electrical toy, or any toy, for a child too young to use it safely. Always check the minimum age recommendation on the package, and take into account your child's capabilities.
- Never give any child under 10 years old a toy that must be plugged into an electrical outlet, but instead, choose toys that are battery-operated.
- Make sure all electrical toys bear a fire safety label from an independent testing laboratory, such as UL (Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.).
- Ban play with electrical toys near water and make sure children understand that water and electricity don't mix.

## Decorating safely

Christmas, Christmas Eve and New Year's Day lead the year for candle fires, according to ESFI. Mind your festive decorations for safety hazards:

- Keep candles, matches and lighters out of reach, and never leave children unsupervised when candles are lit, or instead of traditional candles, try using battery-operated candles.
- Cover any unused outlets even on extension cords, with plastic caps or electrical tape to prevent children from coming in contact with a live outlet.
- Never allow children to play with lights, electrical decorations or cords. Place electrical cords out of the reach of small children.

The holidays can be a magical time of year, especially for children, and by following these tips everyone can safely enjoy the season. ■



**CAEC Offices will be Closed Dec. 24-25 and on Jan. 1**

**Have a Safe and Happy New Year!**

# Have an idea to make your home more energy efficient, but not the finances?

Let CAEC help you with a loan for efficiency improvements!



Does your home need better insulation? New windows and exterior doors? A more efficient heat pump?

If the answer is yes, but you're wondering how to pay for these improvements as well as contractor costs, CAEC, in conjunction with PowerSouth and Regions Bank, has developed a loan program for financing weatherization in your home with low annual interest rates-ensuring you can get the efficiency improvements you need at a fair cost.

Contact CAEC today for more details on Energy Efficiency for your home. Call us at (800) 545-5735 ext. 2118.



Central Alabama  
Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

[www.caec.coop](http://www.caec.coop)



REGIONS®



# CALLING FOR NOMINATIONS

## PEOPLE WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

CAEC is seeking nominations for individuals who are “Making a Difference” in your community. Tell us about individuals who are giving back in your community, people whose unselfishness and personal stories inspire you. If selected, we will feature their story in one of our 2013 issues of *Alabama Living* magazine.

**Nominees must be a resident of CAEC’s 10-county service area.** Visit our website, [www.caec.coop](http://www.caec.coop) for more details and to complete the nomination form, or call (800) 545-5735 ext. 2115. You can enter your answers to the essay questions directly on the form or write them first in a word document and “cut and paste” them into each answer field. **A form must be completed for consideration.**



**Reading to children**



**Feeding the less fortunate**



**Assisting the elderly**



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